No. 33

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

Price 10¢

"Perhaps you will not be able to do anything for me," she went on hastily. "You see, Mr. Gordon has ordered me to leave his house, and I am ready to go now."
R. of M. G., No. 33.

Copyright 1926 by
THE NIELEN PUBLISHING CO.
Cincinnati, Ohio.

PITY WAS mirrored in Guy Fillmore's eyes as they rested upon his lovely young wife. He knew what she meant by saying that he must write a statement for the newspapers. The next instant he felt her clutch his arm in sheer desperation.

"Yes, you must do so at once!" she cried. "You must write to all the newspapers in the city and deny what that article implies."

He shook his head hopelessly.

"What would be the use?"

"What would be the use,Guy?"

"Yes."

"It is the only thing to do."

Again he shook his head.

"A thousand statements to the newspapers could not repair the damage already done," he declared as he dropped into a cair and buried his face in his hands "The fact alone that this beast of a man had you to himself for two nights is enough to condemn you, however innocent you are."

She flew at him, seized him by the shoulders and shook him.

"But surely, we can not let the thing rest where it is!" she exclaimed. "I could not bear to look any of my friends in the face if they believed that I gave in to that brute."

He freed himself with jerk.

"Listen to me!" he answered in a dead voice. "I know you didn't. But we could never make your friends and my friends see it in our light. You may rest assured that they will believe the worst."

"They have no right!" stormed Ruth. "They will not dare ———"

Guy interrupted her fiercely.

"They believe the worst now!" he shouted. "And they will always believe it!"

For almost a minute he stood wringing his hands in silent agony.

Finally he burst out:

"Oh, why did you ever go with that brute? Why couldn't you have killed yourself instead of coming back to me. I wish to God I had made an end of you instead of bringing you back to New York with me."

Fillmore could not have said anything worse at the present moment. It was brutal in the extreme.

Ruth dug both of her hands into her left breast. She stared hard at her husband for a moment,then she began to stagger..

With his last words still ringing in her ears, she uttered a shrill little wail then spun half way around, and fell senseless to the floor.

Chapter 106

MARIE'S SACRIFICE

WITH THE home-coming of the Gordon children, life at Oak Manor went on in its usual tenor. Of course, it was not always so quiet in the big house. Youthful enthusiasm can not be suppressed, and neither the father nor the governess made any attempt to do so. Phil insisted that Marie take her meals with the family, much to her discomfiture.

It was the only occasion where she came in close personal contact with his second wife, for Alice had chosen to resume her positon in full as the manager of the household.

Alice never missed an opportunity to snub the lovely governess. Her treatment of Marie often brought an angry flush to the latter's face.

However, these slights and insults were never dealt out in Phil's presence. And it was the contemptible stealthiness on Alice's part that hurt most.

Harold Wayne, now almost a daily visitor at Oak Manor, was frequently invited to take dinner.

This gave Marie an opportunity to study the man. It did not take her long to discover that there was some secret understanding between him and the woman who posed as Phil's second wife.

One afternoon as Marie was taking a stroll alone through the grounds, she was attracted by a voice. It was Alice's voice, speaking from the window of her boudoir to someone below.

"If you wait until I can come down," it said, "I'll talk to you. I am anxious to see you."

Marie looked about in order to see to whom these words were addressed. She was surprised when she saw Harold Wayne leaning against a tree a short distance away.

While deliberate eavesdropping had never been one of her favorite habits, she was curious to know why Alice wanted to see Wayne at this hour of the day.

She tarried for a little while, a hedge of shrubbery and plants keeping her hidden from view.

It must not have taken Alice very long to get ready to come downstairs, for her voice, now speaking, was heard again.

"I'll have to be careful, Harold," it murmured, though loud enough for Marie to hear. "I believe that my husband is on to us. Meet me to-night in the pavillion. at the usual hour."

What Wayne answered could not be understood. But a few moments later he left the grounds with his head high and a grin on his face.

If there was one place Marie disliked, it was the pavillion.

She never went near it because the foundation of her great domestic trouble and unhappiness had been laid under the roof of that structure.

It was to this same pavillion Phil had taken Alice on that never-to-be-forgotten night.

And because of what happened there, she had come to the conclusion that her husband was carrying on a secret affair with the woman who later became his second wife.

What her emotions were at this particular moment could not well be put in words. But above all she felt sorry for Phil.

He was being deceived in his own home.

All afternoon the governess brooded over the

matter. What if Phil caught his wife and Harold Wayne together? Such a thing might happen.

Alice, in her words to the man had proclaimed the fact that her husband's suspicions were aroused. A momentous statement!

And if this was the case, it was more than likely that Phil would keep an eye on his wife.

Marie trembled as a sudden thought came to her. Phil was an honorable man who thoroughly hated deceit. She had heard him say more than once that he could forgive a woman anything but that.

And he was hot-tempered. He was always terrible in his anger.

A tragedy was certain if he found Alice in a compromising position with the man who unmistakably was her accepted lover.

That evening Marie did not go down to dinner. She could not have eaten a bite if her very life had depended upon it.

With her fingers tightly interlaced behind her back, she paced the floor in her room. Slowly the clock on the mantel ticked on.

When it finally struck ten, she could contain herself no longer. She must avert what seemed to be a certain calamity.

Silently she stole down the rear stairway and reached the grounds. A cluster of trees offered shelter. From this position she could see anyone who walked in the direction of the pavillion.

With bated breath she waited.

Presently a woman's figure approached. Marie recognized Alice in spite of the cape and hood which enveloped her.

Like a shadow, Marie followed.

Hardly a minute passed when someone came a-

cross the grounds from another direction.

The first glance told Marie that this man was none other than Harold Wayne. With a jaunty air and with his shoulders thrown back, he approached the pavillion.

Then came a half smothered exclamation , and Marie knew that the guilty pair were in each other's arms.

She stood transfixed, scarcely breathing.

A feeling of utter loathing rushed over her. Then her thoughts turned to Phil. And she thought of the fearful consequences which would most surely result in a tragedy if he learned the truth.

There is only one satisfaction which an honorable and a true man deems sufficient when his home is invaded.

That is the death of the invader!

Marie knew this, and she trembled for the safety for the father of her children.

Already she saw him on trial for the murder of Harold Wayne. She never stopped to consider that no jury in America had ever convicted a man of murder under such circumstances.

She followed her impulse to prevent that possibility of discovery of the guilty pair by Phil and thus avoid, at any price, the disgrace of his name and the public knowledge of his wife's shame.

Taking a few steps forward, she paused.

She could hear the murmuring of voices in the pavillion. Of the two voices that of Alice stood out the more prominently.

As Marie happend to glance over her shoulder, her heart stopped beating. A man was coming toward the pavillion.

"Merciful God, it is Phil!" she gasped.

Without hesitating another instant, she ran up the stairs and entered the pavillion. As she expected, she found Alice and Wayne seated with their arms about each other.

She gave them no time to protest, but quickly put a hand to her lips, demanding silence.

Alice sprang up, her face crimson.

"Leave instantly!" Marie warned in a whisper. "Your husband is coming. If he finds you two here together, there will be a tragedy!"

Before Mrs. Gordon could frame a reply, or even think of one, she found herself pushed toward the rear exit of the pavillion.

And she managed to escape in the nick of time, for Phil was ascending the stairs in the front. He was coming fast.

Harold Wayne stood as if paralyzed.

He stared at the approaching man, not yet realizing that it was Gordon.

Marie had taken a position at Wayne's side.

Phil walked around Wayne with the evident intention of getting a good look at the woman who stood so close.

Then a low exclamation escapèd his lips.

"Miss Desmond!" he cried. "You here and alone with that man?"

Surprise and unutterable pain rang in his voice. Marie felt crushed. She could not raise her eyes to his, although she tried gamely.

Gordon stood dazed.

The disturbed, guilty face of Harold Wayne and Marie's obvious consternation told the story. They both looked guilty.

He could not conceive how this beautiful governess, a woman with education and refinement could fall

to the depth of throwing herself away on a man like the one he found her with.

He had believed her to be purity itself. He would have staked his very life on her chastity. He had always looked upon her as a superior woman. And now his idol lay crushed on the ground.

"I —— I don't know what to say," he began at last, half in anger, half in sorrow. "What does this all mean? For God's sake, explain!"

Marie's head was bowed until her chin touched her heaving breast.

Her attitude was indeed that of a woman very much ashamed of what she had done. Her continued silence led Gordon to believe the worst.

"I am —— I am sorry," he spoke again, and very slowly. "I never expected anything like this from you, Miss Desmond."

Again he waited for some word of explanation, some word of justification.

Ah, how he longed to hear this lovely woman deny that anything wrong had taken place. And he would have believed her, had she spoken. But the silence was maddening.

Then Phil straightened up, his eyes ablaze.

"Since you refuse to speak, Miss Desmond," he cried, his voice harsh, "I must inform you that your services are no longer wanted here. You must realize, that under these circumstances you can not continue in the care and training of my children.

"Although your term of service has not yet expired, I shall pay you in full, and I expect you to leave the first thing in the morning. And please, do not go into the nursery again, either to-night or at any other time. This is final."

Only a suppressed sob came from the condemned

woman.

Then Gordon turned to Harold Wayne with an angry snarl.

"As far as you are concerned!" he thundered, "I forbid you to ever enter my house or invade my grounds again. I had been told that you were somewhat of a skunk before you came.

"As a rule I do not pay much attention to such gossip, preferring to learn facts for meself. I dare say I learned.

"Well, in your case gossip did not lie. You are as black as they painted you. But you went too far when you deliberately came here to meet a member of my family in so stealthy a manner."

Harold Wayne had not moved an inch. What Gordon told him about himself he was ready to pass up It mattered little now.

But he bitterly resented the unjust accusation hurled at an innocent woman's head. That was one thing he was not going to stand for. Miss Desmond did not deserve it.

Whatever his other shortcomings were, he must be given credit for being a chivalrous man.

This governess was deliberately sacrificing herself for another. Alice evidently had been willing to accept this great sacrifice, for she had disappeared very quickly.

But nothing could have been further from his mind than even the thought of playing the cad in such a crisis.

Although he had met Marie only a few times, he admired and respected her. He had admired many women, but respected few. A quick thought flashed through his alert brain as he drew himself up.

"Mr. Gordon," he said, his voice clear and steady,

"you are perfectly within your rights in ordering me to leave your place. And I will not dispute at this time what the gossips said about me.

"But you are making a most serious mistake in Miss Desmond's case. She is not —— ".

"I am the best judge of that!" Phil broke in angrily. "I am the master of my household and I have never discharged a servant without cause."

Wayne held himself under control.

"I do not want to question your judgement on previous occasions, sir," he declared. "But I repeat you are making a mistake now. Moreover, I resent your unfair treatment of Miss Desmond."

Gordon wheeled upon the speaker.

"You resent —— " He paused and uttered a harsh laugh.

"Indeed, I do," the other said. "Perhaps you were not aware of the fact that —— that this young lady to whom you addressed yourself, is my promised wife. Were you?"

Something like a gasp escaped Gordon's tightly compressed lips.

He stared at Marie, then at Harold Wayne. This thing could not be true.. Again his amazed eyes sought the woman. She remained silent with both of her hands over her heart.

The words of protest she wanted to utter, never came.

"Do you —— do you mean to tell me that Miss Desmond is your affianced wife?" Phil cried, still absolutely incredulous.

"Yes," reaffirmed the younger man.

Once more Gordon's eyes rested on Marie's white face. And then he realized that if these two were engaged, he had indeed made a serious blunder. He had

rather made a fool of himself, too.

"I owe you an apology, Miss Desmond," he said, bitter disappointment and pain in his voice. "The same goes for you, Mr. Wayne," turning to the latter. "Please allow me to congratulate you both."

Marie's hands were suddenly raised.

She made a move toward Phil, but he did not see it. He had already wheeled about.

Harold Wayne held her in check as she attempted to follow Gordon from the pavillion. With a low, half smothered sob, she began to waver and she was assisted to a chair.

Chapter 107

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE

ALICE GORDON had reached the security of her boudoir without being observed. The expression on her face was that of a woman who had witnessed a miracle. Why had this governess saved her from being caught alone with Harold Wayne in the pavilion?

What was her motive?

As she stepped before the mirror a peculiar smile curled her sensuous lips. Gratefulness was an emotion entirely unknown to her.

And even if her hatred of Marie had been less vindictive, it is doubtful that she would have given her any credit for her timely interference.

Neither did she worry for a moment about this Miss Desmond and Harold Wayne.

She had been rescued from a very dangerous situation and that was really all that mattered. She was safe. Let the others look out for themselves.

Curiosity drew her to the window. Presently she saw her husband cross the lawn and enter the house. But instead of coming directly upstairs, Gordon went into the library.

This was a disappointment to Alice.

Now she would have to wait until morning before she learned what transpired in the pavilion after she made her hasty exit.

Little did she dream that Wayne had played the part of a man, and that the best in his character had been brought to the surface because of a really good

woman's ugly predicament.

So while she disrobed leisurely and crawled into her luxurious bed, a tragedy was being played to the end in the pavillion.

Marie was seated in a chair, sobbing convulsively Phil's voice was constantly ringing in her ears. He had believed her guilty of carrying on a vile intrigue with Harold Wayne.

Every natural instinct had prompted her to cry out aloud and defend herself.

But she had remained silent because of her intense fear of the consequences if she told the nasty truth Phil would doubtlessly have killed his wife's lover on the spot had he found them in each other's arms. She felt sure of that.

In sacrificing herself she had put a black mark on her name.

The only bright spot in the whole frightful situation was Wayne's suggestion that she was his bride-to-be.

This furnished the excuse for them being alone together in the pavillion at this rather unseemly hour of the night.

But there was no satisfaction in this for the unhappy woman. Before heaven she was still Philip Gordon's wife, and she loved him more than ever. How, then could she pose as the affianced wife of another?

"Oh, what have I done?" she moaned, wringing her hands in nameless agony. "I can not leave this place and yet I must."

Harold Wayne had been about to speak several times. In fact he wanted to say something to soothe Miss Desmond, for was he not responsible for her ugly predicament?

"I —— I can't tell you how terribly sorry I am."

he stammered.

"Why —— oh, why did you say that we were engaged?" Marie wailed.

"To save you," he replied promptly. "I saw the tremendous sacrifice you were making for another. I realized that you meant to protect her name from the shame and a scandal.

"When Gordon so unjustly condemned you and ordered you to leave his house, I could not keep silent. It was impossible.

"I took the only means within my power to explain your presence here at this hour. And —— and my dear Miss Desmond," he went on, a slight quiver in his voice," I do not regret what I have said. If you are willing we shall be married to-morrow.

"I know I am unworthy of you, but I'll make you happy if you give me half a chance. Won't you consider this proposition seriously? Really, it is the only thing to do under the circumstances."

Marie was deeply touched by the man's offer.

He was sincere, of that she was sure. But marry Alice's lover? Never!"

And besides, ther were too many other reasons why such a union was utterly out of the question. She already had a husband, although the world believed her dead. Her heart and soul belonged to Phil.

"I shall never marry, Mr. Wayne," she told him frankly. "Please, let that be understood."

He shrugged his shoulders, then came a little closer and put a hand lightly on her arm. His eyes were eloquent.

"Miss Desmond," he said with deep feeling, "I expected you to refuse me. It is only natural that you you should do so. How could you —— or any other self-respecting woman marry a man with a reputation like

mine? You heard what Mr. Gordon said about me. Well, it is true."

Marie gave him a long glance, then shook her head slowly.

"Mr. Wayne," she replied, suffering his hand to lay on her arm, "your admission of your shortcomings does you credid. No doubt women are your weakness. But I am willing to wager that you never took unfair advantage of one."

"What makes you think that?" he inquired with a forced smile.

"Your conduct to-night," Marie answered. "You might have extricated yourself from this compromising position with me by merely remaining silent and allowing Mr. Gordon to draw his own conclusions —— which he did. I would have been discharged. I fully expected to be. But ——"

"I believe in fair play, Miss Desmond," he interrupted. "You were an innocent party and I could not let you assume the shame that should have fallen upon the shoulders of another."

Marie rose to her feet and breathed a sigh. While a storm was still raging within her, outwardly she appeared calm.

"Of course, I am grateful to you," she said. "But what is to be done now? If we both deny what you told Mr. Gordon, we will brand ourselves as liars. I suppose the only thing to do is to allow this sham to go on until we find an opportunity to end it."

Wayne nodded vigorously.

"Yes, I agree with you," he responded. "And I don't think that there is any harm in you posing as my promised bride."

"No, there isn't, Mr. Wayne, but before we agree on that I must ask a favor of you."

"I'll do anything you may care to ask of me," came back eagerly.

Marie stood in front of the young man now, with both of her hands on his shoulders.

"Promise me that you will never again meet Mrs. Gordon alone anywhere or at any time," she said with a great deal of feeling. "No matter what you have done in the past and what your reputation may be so far as women are concerned, I firmly believe in this case that Mrs. Gordon was most to blame. There is real gold in your character, Mr. Wayne."

When the latter smiled appreciatively, she went on earnestly:

"A man who is capable of doing what you did to-night, must have some good in him. You are young, wealthy and handsome. You can make your life count for something.

"Why waste your energy and time running after married women? Try to earn the respect of your friends rather than their condemnation. Philip Gordon is the noblest man God ever made.

"He has trusted you, and you have violated that trust. There is not the least doubt in my mind but that he would have killed you on the spot had he found his wife in your arms.. Why take such desperate and such foolish chances.

"But I will not refer to that again," Marie said quickly as Harold Wayne flushed scarlet. "Promise me that you will endeavor to be as honorable as you can in all your dealings with men and women from this night on. Will you do that?"

Harold Wayne showed plainly that he had been deeply moved.

He squared his wide shoulders and looked into the woman's eyes.

"I give you that promise, Miss Desmond," he answered. "And I'll keep it because you ask it. I wish there were more women in the world like you. There is one thing I would like to add:

"Please do not blame Mrs. Gordon too much for what happened. It is allways the man who makes the first move in the wrong direction. While she encouraged me to some extent, I had no right to meet her in the pavillion to-night."

Marie gave him one of her rare smiles.

"Your desire to shield Mrs. Gordon again proves that you are a man," she told him. "And now we must separate. I will go first and you follow me a few minutes later. Good night, Mr. Wayne."

"Good night," the latter replied in a whisper. He pressed her hand.

Her heart filled with conflicting emotions, Marie quickly left the pavillion. Not until she reached her room did the strength which had sustained her up to this moment leave her.

She collapsed weakly on a chair and began to sob. Her thoughts were all of the man whom she so fondly and so proudly had called her husband.

"Oh, how he must despise me," she wailed hopelessly. "I could see it in his eyes when he uttered those words of apology and ended by congratulating Wayne and myself upon our supposed engagement."

Poor Marie's mental torments would have been intensified a hundred-fold had she but known what sort of an impression the scene in the pavillion hade made upon Phil.

At this particular moment he was pacing the floor in the library, a prey to an indescribable passion. He was furious with himself.

Why should he feel the pangs of bitter disappoint-

ment because he had found the governess of his two children alone with Harold Wayne in the pavillion? Why should he?

What did her conduct with another man concern him?

And then, suddenly, came the realization that he loved this strangely beautiful woman.

At first her remarkable devotion to his children had awakened in him a kindly feeling for her. Then the letter which she had written to him while in the south with his children, revealing her wonderful spirituality, had captured him completely.

Phil could not deny any longer that he loved this Miss Desmond.

As a matter of fact he had been in love with her for a long time without being conscious of it. Ah, the strange irony of fate!

It was the discovery in the pavillion which caused him to recognize what was going on within him. And now he could not stifle the cries of his love-hungry heart.

He cursed Harold Wayne.

He cursed himself.

What continued to puzzle him, however, was how a woman of Miss Desmond's high type saw in a man like Wayne.

They were unevenly matched. Wayne possessed all the superficial traits of a modern Beau Brummel. He was vain to an exasperating degree. He could never be true to on woman.

"If he don't treat her right after they are married, I'll kill him!" Phil vowed fiercely.

It was long after midnight when at last he began to undress and sought forgetfulness in sleep. For several hours he tossed upon his bed, groaning and muttering

to himself.

Ugly dreams tortured him. It was always the same scene that came before his eyes —— Marie Desmond with her arms about Wayne's neck and their lips meeting in a passionate kiss.

But Philip Gordon was not the only one whose dreams brought misery.

His wife was also having a bad night. Alice's nerves had been badly shattered by the experience in the pavillion. She knew that she had escaped calamity by a hair's breadth.

And she was deeply worried about the consequences. What would be the outcome of the affair? How would Wayne explain the situation?

Chapter 108

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

THE DOMESTIC peace of the Fillmore's had received a jolt. It was said of the young husband that he had taken to drink, and that the lovely young wife was about to take the first step down the social ladder. Part of this was true and the other part was on the verge of becoming a most unpleasant fact.

One thing, which aroused a great deal of comment as well as speculation, was the fact that the couple who formerly seemed so devoted to one another rarely went out together now.

The dreadful ordeal Ruth underwent in the Canadian mountains, was destined to have the most fateful consequences.

These consequences had errected an insurmountable barrier between her and her husband.

Guy Fillmore was not playing the part of a man in the matter. In his every act and speech he demeaned himself like a cad.

Of course, the constant jibes of some of his so-called friends about his wife's experience, had played havoc with his nerves. It caused him to lose the right perspective of the situation.

Instead of defending Ruth he laughed with those who made insinuations. But underneath that laugh of his was a heart torn with pain.

It cut him to the very soul to realize that it was generally believed that his lovely young wife had been the mistress of an outlaw.

All this brought about a certain feeling of resentment toward Ruth. It was so like an unreasonable man to blame her for everything in connection with the ugly outlaw."

"Had you used a little brain and common sense the thing would never have happened!" he stormed at her one day as the question came up for another long discussion. "A single scream would have brought me to the spot, and I would have made short work of that beastlly outlaw."

Ruth never answered when her husband began such a tirade. She tried it once by telling Guy that the outlaw would have shot and killed her had she made the least sound.

"Nonsense!" had been her husband's snarling reply on that occasion. "You lost your head when you needed it. And I believe my soul, you rather enjoyed the adventure at the time.

"You always were on the lookout for experiences that bordered on the sensational so you could talk about it afterward.

"Well, our friends are doing the talking for you, and some of them think that you are not fit to be the wife of a decent man. That damned outlaw would have been kinder had he killed us both."

And then poor Ruth would burst into tears and weep for hours. She began to hate all men and she was almost on the verge of hating her husband.

So far as her women friends were concerned, the nasty affair was never mentioned in her presence. But the male sex seemed to be degenerating. They kept on nagging Guy until they made a beast out of him.

The first time he came home under the influence of liquor, she fled to her boudoir and locked herself in. To his pounding for admittance she turned a deaf ear.

And the next morning instead of apologizing, Guy glowered at her across the breakfast table and left for his office without kissing her.

After that he came home in that same condition quite frequently. Ruth realized that her married happiness was forever gone.

Then she learned from one of her closest friends that Guy had been seen in the company of several chorus girls at a cabaret. As soon as he arrived at their cozy apartment that evening, she took him to task.

"Who told you that?" he demanded angrily as she finished with her accusation. "Was it Mrs. Langley?"

Ruth denied it, although Mrs. Langley had furnished the information.

"It must have been!" Guy insisted. "And the next time you see her, ask her what she was doing there? And ask her also if her husband knew that she had another man with her."

For a long moment Ruth stared at her husband.

"Then you admit that you were there," she said quietly, her face pale as death.

Fillmore was too wrought up to defend himself with any degree of shrewdness or even decency. He swore violently.

"What if I was?" he cried.

"What — what if you was?" Ruth repeated the crass statement with a broken gasp. "Why, Guy, is that treating me right? What have I done to deserve that sort of a deal from you?"

"What haven't you done?" he shrieked. "You made me the laughing stock of all New York!"

And poor Ruth, fearing that a prolonged argument would end in violence on her husband's part, broke into tears and sought refuge in her boudoir as usual.

During the unhappy days which came now, she re-

ceived more convincing evidence that Guy was being weaned away from her by unwholesome companions and drink.

But she was determined that the world at large should never know how utterly miserable she was.

There were moments, when, in the rebellion of her soul, she thought of leaving her husband.

But where could she go? The idea of returning to Chicago to her brother was impossible. Poor Phil had enough trouble of his own. She had no desire to add to them.

Then something occurred which was almost the last straw. One night at an unusually late hour Guy came home.

As she had failed to lock the door which led to her boudoir, he came in and rudely shook her by the arm. She awoke with a little scream and sat up.

"Well, what do you want?" she asked sleepily.

"I'll tell you what I want," he told her, an ominous light in his blood-shot eyes.

"Oh, you have been drinking again," she said, crouching against the wall. "You ought to know by this time that I don't care to talk to you when you are like that. Please leave me alone."

His laugh was terrifying.

"I'll leave you alone plenty," he returned with a new kind of an anger. "But I'll tell you first what I think of you."

Ruth was no longer the demure and self-effacing young wife that she once had been. A quick succession of hard knocks had aroused the fighting spirit within her. She was no man's slave now.

"That is old stuff, my dear," she remarked icily. "You told me ever so many times what you think of me and I am tired of hearing it."

"Is that so?" he sneered. "Well, what I am going to tell you now is absolutely new—to me. I suppose it will be old stuff to you because you were one of the parties in the affair."

At this Ruth sat up in bed. A sudden feeling of apprehension took possession of her.

"Well—what is it?" she gasped.

Fillmore regarded his lovely young wife with something like contempt as she retorted:

"Met a man at the club who came from Chicago. I don't know what made him so damned inquisitive. When I told him that I had married a girl by the name of Ruth Gordon, he gave me a funny look, and then he smiled. When I asked him for an explanation he froze up.

"'Oh, it's nothing,' he said. 'And besides, I may be entirely wrong. The girl I have in mind may not be the Ruth Gordon of my story. The one about whom a spicy anecdote is told was the sister of Philip Gordon, a very wealthy Chicago business man.'

"Then I told him that you were Philip Gordon's sister. He hesitated a while and then opened up. He knew a chauffeur or something like that who had an affair with Ruth Gordon, and that, after they were separated, she lost her mind and was confined in a sanitarium.

"Now then, old girl," he added with an oath, "what have you to say for yourself? Out with it. I want you to tell me the truth about that affair."

Ruth made no immediate answer because her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth.

She had never dreamed that the one misstep of her young girlhood would be forced down her throat at this hour.

"Well, why don't you speak?" her husband challenged. "Who was this man who caused you to go crazy

about him?"

Again she remained silent. Her mind was a whirlpool of thoughts, but not a single one contained the excuse she needed. And yet, she knew she must say something in her own defense.

"You have no more right to pry into my past, than I have to pry into yours," she cried finally.

"The hell I haven't!" Fillmore swore. "Do you think for a minute I would have married you if I had known then what I know now? Up there at Bar Harbor you played around that damned skunk who murdered the——"

"If you must use profane language, go outside, please," Ruth interrupted him.

"This is my apartment and I'll say and do as I feel like in it," he shot back quickly. "But I'll go, and before I do, I want to tell you this: from now on you go your way, and I'll go mine.

"Oh, no," he cried when he saw her lips curl into a smile, "I am not going to divorce you. That would make it too easy for you. And you better watch your step from now on."

"You won't divorce me?" she said with exasperating sweetness. "And why not? I should imagine you'd want a legal separation from a woman with a past like mine."

Guy Fillmore, even in his semi-intoxicated condition was not unresponsive to his young wife's tantalizing charm.

In fact in her present negligee, with her golden hair tousled and her soft cheeks abloom with peach blossoms, she looked more beautiful, more desirable than ever.

"I am not such a fool," he cried, reaching for her eagerly. "You belong to me, remember that. I'd rather

kill you than give another man a chance to——"

The last sentence remained unfinished becaus Ruth's hand came in violent contact with his mouth a he attempted to draw her to him.

The short struggle ended when she shot past him seized a heavy vase from the mantel and confronted hin with blazing eyes.

"If you ever lay your filthy hands on me again I'll kill you!" she screamed. "Now get out of this roon and never speak to me unless you are willing to apol gize."

This sobered the man. He blinked at her uncer tainly for a moment, muttered something under hi breath and left.

Ruth slammed the door after him and locked it And now the reaction of the scene came. Her nerve gave way, and she threw herself across the bed anc sobbed. How the night passed she could not afterwarc remember.

It was broad daylight when the servant came tc inform her that breakfast was ready.

"Where is Mr. Fillmore?" she asked.

"He left over an hour ago," Ruth was told.

"Alright, then I'll eat."

Seated alone at the table, the young Mrs. Fillmor had ample time for reflection. She missed Guy's cheer ful laugh and good-natured banter.

What a splendid husband he had been befor moonshine and gossips did their deadly work and mad a beast out of him.

Among the whirlwind of conflicting thoughts on stood out prominently.

She loved him in spite of all that had happened Life without him could not be worth living.

Her final decision was that she would tell Guy th

truth about her girlish love affair. Surely he would not condemn her if she threw herself upon his mercy. But Ruth had yet to learn that husbands, as a rule, never forgive a wife with a past.

For in spite of the emancipation of women, there still exists two moral standards.

One for the male sex and the other for the female sex. The former may stray from the straight and narrow path, and he will be forgiven.

But let a woman fall only once, and her doom is sealed.

Chapter 109

EXPLANATIONS

THE DAY was one long to be remembered by the entire Gordon household. It was whispered about that Miss Desmond, the governess had decided to leave within a week. Of course the news was carried to Alice, dressing with usual care in her boudoir. She received it with a smile of triumph

She took it for granted that this sudden decision on the part of the hated governess was the outcome of the scene in the pavilion the night before.

And it was true. Marie, after a sleepless night had come to this conclusion after hours of careful deliberation.

There was really nothing else to be done under the circumstances.

Phil had asked her to leave. Of course, he had apologized after Wayne gave such a sudden turn to the entire situation by declaring that she was his promised wife.

But Phil had failed to recall his previously uttered words of a peremptory dismissal.

The prospect of leaving the children nearly drove the poor mother wild. She struggled heroically not to betray the fierce pain in her heart as she met them as usual at the breakfast table,

And what made it worse was the fact that both, Harry as well as little Phyllis, clung to her with an affection that brought tears to her eyes.

Did they have an intuition of what was about to come to pass? Marie managed somehow to pass the

morning hours without breaking down.

She felt relieved that she had not yet been called upon to meet Phil face to face. He had taken his breakfast alone in the library and remained there.

Why he did not go to his Chicago office no one knew but himself.

During the afternoon Harold Wayne called. He asked to see Mr. Gordon, and was closeted with the latter for over an hour. Another caller arrived in the person of Dr. Van Buren.

Phil asked him to stay for dinner that evening, and the physician accepted.

It was indeed a strange meeting between the actors in last night's drama in the big dining room. Wayne greeted Marie with an air of tenderness and respect.

Alice smiled at the governess jeeringly, while Phil turnd away with a scowl.

It suddenly occurred to Phil to present to Dr. Van Buren the couple who had announced themselves as engaged the night before in the pavilion.

"By the way, doctor," he remarked drily, "allow me to present to you Mr. Harold Wayne and Miss Marie Desmond, engaged."

Dr. Van Buren glanced at the speaker incredulously, then turned to Marie, who had become very pale and who purposely occupied herself with the children to hide her embarrassment.

No one seemed to notice that the physician did not offer his congratulations.

"Is that so?" the latter drawled and let it go at that.

Marie was seated next to Wayne on the one side. She hardly spoke nor looked up from her plate, for it was painful to see Phil's dark, brooding face.

Harold Wayne was playing his role very well. He

made several attempts to draw the lovely governess into a conversation, but with little success.

"I am going to leave this neighborhood, Miss Desmond," he whispered, bending a little closer.

She gave a slight nod.

"Yes, Mr. Wayne is taking a trip through the west," Phil, who had intercepted the whispered remark, spoke up. "He has come to the conclusion that agriculture is not his line."

Alice gave the young man a sharp glance, but there was absolutely no telling by the expression of her face what was going on in her mind.

In the general conversation which followed now, she took a spirited part and laughed frequently.

Marie sat appalled at the woman's callousness. How could she, her soul stepped with sin, laugh and chat in such a light-hearted manner?

It was obvious, however, that the end of the dinner was greeted with a sigh of relief by at least three of the party. Philip Gordon drew Dr. Van Buren into the library.

Neither spoke until they were comfortably seated and smoking.

"I find myself confronted with a puzzle," the physician declared at last. "You tell me that Miss Desmond and Wayne are engaged. I can't understand how a woman like her could fall for——"

A harsh laugh from Gordon interrupted him.

"You must not be surprised at anything that happens in this age, my dear friend," Phil exclaimed. "Women are not what they used to be. Quite often some high-minded female falls for the flattery of a man who is her intellectual inferior. Men like Wayne, are very interesting to them."

Continued in next number

Tell Your Own Fortune!

M'lle LeNormand's
Only Genuine and Complete

Fortune Telling Cards

Instructive and Amusing

THE celebrated Fortune Teller M'lle LeNormand has foretold the Emperor Napoleon I., his ruin and the plotting of his relatives. Everything came to pass precisely as she had predicted. By special desire of Napoleon I., M'lle LeNormand presented him the cards from which the prophecy has been made, and also her written interpretation and instructions.

Amongst the Imperial Family Treasure this Gift was the most valued and treasured article.

The son of Napoleon III., having become possessed of this relic, could not escape his fate, however, being killed at an early age while battling for the English in the African campaign.

George Korn, native of Alsatia, a sailor and linguist, speaking German, French and English was captured by the Zulu tribe who had become possessed of the interpretations, instructions and cards taken from the body of Napoleon's son. Whilst in captivity, Korn often saw these cards.

Only these Cards and Nothing Else can be thy Savior

were his continual thoughts. Under the impulse of this inspiration he informed the chief of the magical power of these cards, which in possession of an enemy would cause dire disaster to his family as well as himself. Thoroughly frightened the chief gave this treasure to Korn and escorted him to the seacoast far from his place of captivity. After various wanderings and adventures he arrived at the German colony Kameron, where he secured a position on board a Hamburg merchant ship; and through these events we became possessed of the *Genuine Cards*, the handwritten interpretation and instructions how to use them.

M'lle LeNormand destroyed her cards and instructions before her death and had the ashes inclosed in a vessel of lead and which was laid in her tomb according to her last will, so these interpretations written for Napoleon I., and so cleverly saved by Korn were the only and genuine existing. These cards—Oraculum—have been tried in important events and are indeed *"Answers of Destiny."* For the believers it is a sacred treasure and in many instances an article of great value. Unbelievers can pass many tedious hours pleasantly in many ways, particularly in answering delicate questions correctly or otherwise. M'lle LeNormand's instructions in both English and German are complete and plain, and can readily be interpreted by everybody.

Price 50 Cents

Agents can make large sales and earn good profits. Very easy to sell. Enclose amount in postage-stamps and secure sample copy of terms and instructions.

You can order these cards from person delivering this book or we send them well packed, by mail, postage prepaid on receipt of price.

BARCLAY & CO.

P. O. Box 847
CINCINNATI, O.

Printed in U. S. A.